

Legislation would create an immigration system that meets the economic and security needs of our nation by creating laws that are tough, enforceable and realistic

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WASHINGTON -- U.S. Representatives Luis V. Gutierrez (D-Ill.) and Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) joined their colleagues Thursday to unveil new legislation designed to fix our nation's badly broken immigration system. The legislation is the culmination of years of hard work, in-depth discussions and thoughtful negotiations by Reps. Gutierrez and Flake and their colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

"The bill we are discussing today is all about security--homeland security, family security and economic security," Gutierrez said. "It will allow us to better protect our borders and reform an immigration system that is hampering businesses, hurting families and harming communities. It is vital that we work in a bipartisan fashion to tackle this critical issue."

"Our current immigration laws are at odds with reality," Flake said. "This bill addresses that problem by bolstering border security, increased interior enforcement, and creating a temporary worker program that's enforceable and fair."

The bill, the STRIVE Act of 2007 (Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy), would overhaul the current immigration system in a way that better protects and enforces our borders, respects the hard work and contributions of immigrants to our country and reflects the realities of our workforce and the needs of our communities.

"This is good, common sense legislation that addresses border security and the millions of undocumented workers in our country," George Radanovich (R-Calif.) said. "I am particularly pleased to see the AgJOBS language included in this bill so our nation's farmers get the help they need to put food on our tables."

"As the son of an immigrant and a resident of Chicago, I know first-hand, that immigrants make this country strong. Those who have lived in this country for years - who have held jobs, started families and established roots in American communities - deserve the opportunity to earn their citizenship," said Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.). "This legislation enhances protections for immigrants already living and working in the U.S., provides for effective security enforcement, assists in family reunification, encourages legality at our borders, and most importantly treats all immigrants with the dignity and respect they deserve. I am proud to join members from both sides of the aisle in introducing this reform."

"Only a comprehensive immigration reform plan like the STRIVE Act will help us achieve an effective, lasting, and viable solution to the immigration issues facing our nation," said Congressman Luis G. Fortuño (R-PR), chair of the Congressional Hispanic Conference.

Representative Joseph Crowley (D-N.Y.) said, "It is time that we pass comprehensive immigration reform that balances our nation's security with a realistic and humane approach to dealing with the 11 million undocumented individuals already in the United States. This bipartisan legislation enforces accountability and strong border controls, while offering an earned path to citizenship to those who have contributed to our society through hard work. I thank Congressmen Luis Gutierrez and Jeff Flake for renewing their cooperation on this issue so we can finally move forward in fixing our broken immigration system."

If enacted, the Gutierrez-Flake bill would ensure that we have an immigration system in place that meets the security and economic needs of our nation by creating laws that are tough, enforceable and realistic.

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